

Env S 130B - Global Tourism & Environmental Justice

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The People's Tour: A New Paradigm for Cultural Tourism

Ocean Beach, San Diego, CA

This “The People’s Tour” will focus on the Ocean Beach neighborhood and greater Point Loma community in San Diego, CA. This is a beach town located at the end of 8 west, south of Mission Bay and the San Diego River, and northwest of Downtown San Diego. The area encompassing OB, as it's called by locals, is generally considered to be one square mile; its planning area boundaries are denoted by the San Diego River to the north, Pacific Ocean to the west, Froude Street, Seaside Street, and West Point Loma Boulevard to the west, and Adair Street to the south (Ocean Beach Planning Board). The area has long been recognized for its eccentric style, political awareness, and laid-back attitude; however, it also has a long history and association with counter-culture, hippie culture, surf culture, and for being a “touristy” neighborhood in San Diego.

For me, being born and raised in San Diego, OB is a special place that contains many fond memories of childhood and adolescence. If you get on the 8 in OB and drive 15 minutes east, you'll hit my house. It is the place of my youth, teenage rebellion, and coming of age, as it is for many people. I first learned to surf at Dog Beach, I went to see small startup bands with my friends in the crowded back rooms of local shops, I watched the sun go down at Sunset Cliffs, I dug for hidden treasures and marveled at the array of life in the tide pools. The neighborhood holds special familial significance as my grandfather is buried at Fort Rosecrans National Military Cemetery. I have a connection to OB that is different from the way it is viewed by the rest of San Diego and by tourists such as yourself who visit the area. The aim of this tour is to

highlight OB as being more than the bad rep it tends to get, and my hope is that others will come to see a new perspective of OB for all the rich history and magic it holds.

To start, let's talk about OB's community profile. If you are unfamiliar with California or San Diego history, not to fear; we are going to start by discussing the various groups that have lived in and controlled this region over thousands of years. Indigenous peoples have made their home in San Diego County for the past 10,000 years, and at the time of European contact, five distinguishable groups, Luiseno, Cahuilla, Cupeno, Kumeyaay (also known as the Iipai-Tiipai), and Northern Diegueño, were recorded (Carter). In 1542, the estimated population of Indigenous San Diegans was 20,000; in September of that year, Spanish conquistador Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo and his crew were the first Europeans to lay eyes on San Diego and California. At the time Indigenous peoples lived in semi-permanent villages along the coastal and inland areas (Carter). OB was used by the Kumeyaay to fish and process food from mussels, abalone, and lobster, and had an established fishing-encampment called *Hapai* (Viejas Band, 2016). The time of European contact marks a dark time in California history where the land and people were colonized by the Spanish, Mexican and later American governments. Spain established a mission

system designed to convert local Indigenous populations to Christianity and more European ways of life and ideologies, with the first mission, San Diego de Alcalá, established in 1769. Indigenous groups were forced off of their



ancestral homelands and territories along the coast and moved further inland. The Spanish controlled Alta California until 1821, when Mexico won its war of independence and took possession of California. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War, in which Mexico ceded land to the United States, including all of Alta California in 1848; this splits the Kumeyaay nation between two countries. The California Gold Rush of that same year exponentially increased the population of the region, and in 1850 the state of California was admitted to the union (Carter).

It wasn't until 1887 that OB was put on the map; the area was renamed from "Mussel Beach" to "Ocean Beach" by developers Billy Carlson and Albert E. Higgins who had high hopes of developing the region into a resort town. The neighborhood was largely underdeveloped until D.C. Collier laid out streets, promoted sales and built the Point Loma Railroad in 1909, finally connecting OB with the rest of San Diego; the following year, there were 100 houses built. Collier also built the Ocean Beach Elementary School, originally a two-room schoolhouse, to serve the community's children. The Wonderland Amusement Park dominated the northern end of OB which opened on July 4, 1913 constructed on eight oceanfront acres at the foot of Voltaire St and Abbott St. The park later filed for bankruptcy due to competition from the Panama-California Exposition at Balboa Park and closed in 1916 after being washed out by winter storms and large waves (Radwin, 2019). The Bayshore Railway Company built a wooden bridge in 1915 connecting OB to Mission Beach; this bridge was used as part of the San Diego Streetcar trolley system, connected OB with Downtown San Diego, and encouraged development in both OB and Mission Beach. The construction of Interstate 5 in the 1950's and the demolishing of the bridge in 1951, cut off traffic to OB from the Mission and Pacific Beach communities further north (Ocean Beach Historical Society). This geographic isolation,

compounded by the dredging and development of Mission Bay, marked a critical change for the community, setting it apart from surrounding the beach towns of Mission Beach, Pacific Beach and La Jolla, and added to its unique quirkiness (Radwin, 2019). Its relative inaccessibility drew “hippies” to the town in the 1960s, when drug use, protests, and activist marches were widespread. Their radical political stance often put them at odds with the “old timers” and protest meetings, marches, picketing, and angry exchanges were not uncommon (Ocean Beach Mainstreet Association). The Ocean Beach Pier finished construction in July of 1966, making it the longest concrete pier on the West Coast at 1,971 feet (Radwin, 2019). The hippies of the ‘60s became entrepreneurs in the ‘70s, starting new businesses that helped develop OB into a more residential community. Various civic organizations were formed at the time, including the OB Town Council, the Merchant’s Association, and the OB Planning Board (OBHS).

The small cottages, beach bungalows, single-family homes, and two-story apartment buildings were mostly filled with college students, sailors, veterans, retirees, and middle-class families, although some were constructed for tourist accommodations (Radwin, 2019). OB was re-connected to the rest of San Diego following the completion of Interstate 8 in 1967; the westernmost segment of the 8 from the 5 to the end of the freeway in OB is officially labeled the “Ocean Beach Freeway” (OBHS). The 1980’s and ‘90s in OB marked a time when local organizations nurtured its casual, friendly ambience, old traditions were revived, and new ones began. Local merchants found it increasingly difficult to compete



with nearby chain stores, antique and thrift stores began to occupy storefronts previously occupied by department stores, and OB continued to struggle to attract businesses that matched its “village character” (OBMA).

Today, OB continues to be a place that people of all walks of life call home. It is still a hotspot of radical social and environmental activism and many of its residents hold a more liberal political stance in the midst of the larger San Diego County population. Looking at the most recently available census data, the Ocean Beach population’s racial diversity is 73% white, 16% Hispanic, 4% African American, and 4% Asian compared to greater San Diego’s racial diversity that is 55% white, 32% Hispanic, 7% African American, and 6% Asian. 51% of OB’s population is male while 48% is female, 65% of the population is between the ages of 18 and 44, and 36% holds a Bachelor’s degree (The San Diego Union Tribune, 2023).

Tourism is historically rooted in the development and growth of Ocean Beach and has evolved into the community it is today. OB, as we know it, would not exist had it not been for the overly ambitious dreams of Carlson and Higgins to turn the area into a resort town. After the closure of the Wonderland Amusement Park, the center of tourism activity in OB shifted to Newport Avenue, which today holds the majority of the town’s shops, eateries, hotels, and attractions (Radwin, 2019). Beginning in the early 1970’s local development and land use interests pushed for the development of OB’s oceanfront, with plans originally consisting of tourist-oriented resorts, hotels, and a marina all outlined in the “Ocean Beach Precise Plan.” However, in 1972, the local ordinance of a 30 ft height limit on new construction and the rewriting of the Precise Plan, led to the abandonment of waterfront development plans (OBHS). Some pros of tourism in OB are that it generates economic growth and allows for people from different parts of the state, country or world to share in its unique beauty and culture. However,

some negative effects of the industry can manifest in the form of trash left behind on the beaches, the effects of readily accessible drugs and alcohol, and ocean pollution.

The “tourist gaze” presented to OB visitors is one where there is interaction between the tourist who visits an area and those who live there, whether it be positive, negative or neutral (Urry, 1990). The tourist is invited to gaze at what they encounter and not everyone may have the same experience as a tourist in OB; some may interact with a local business owner and learn about their life in OB while others may be gawked at or heckled by local panhandlers. The perceptions that people already hold about OB in their mind also may influence their tourism experience here; the presumptions that people who travel to different places have about the place they are visiting come from many different ideological, political, sociocultural stereotypes and cliches that are perpetuated about certain countries, people, or cultures (Salazar, 2012). Someone who lives in Southern California and visits for a day or two will likely have a very different preconceived notion about this place compared to someone who lives on the east coast or in another country. This tourist gaze can be reinforced or challenged through feedback loops and reverse gazes from destination communities as well as by groups who work in the tourism sector (Salazar, 2012).

Any regular Joe can do a quick Google search about “things to do in Ocean Beach” or “what to do in OB San Diego” and they will probably find information about the same handful of things replicated on different travel sites. You will be told by sites such as Visit California, TripAdvisor, and San Diego Magazine to visit the Ocean Beach Pier, take your dog to the first dog beach in the country, surf and swim at the beach, go shopping down Newport Ave, take pictures at Sunset Cliffs, and to visit the Farmer’s Market. While these are all fun, enjoyable things to do in OB, these are all anyone’s really talking about. It takes more effort on the tourist’s

part to dig up an article or blog discussing the more unique places in OB and the historically important sites; part of it is that the activities above are marketed towards tourists and part of it is that again, they're easy to find.

That's not to say that more alternative tourist advice doesn't exist, for example the local online newspaper *The OB Rag* has a so-called "Hitchhiker's Guide to Ocean Beach" that explores a series of stories to give people a view of OB that can't be found in your typical guide book (Cane, 2014). My particular motivation to explore tourism in OB is to showcase to visitors like you that this place is not just about the "free-wheeling peace and love" we many normally acquaint to the hippies of the '60s, but that it contains Indigenous history, past and present, colonial context critical to understanding the development of the rest of California, surfing history that continues to influence the evolution of the sport today, and above all the emphasis on community and love for the environment that beats in the hearts of so many local residents. OB is a place where counterculture historically and contemporary thrives and the status quo is challenged. It is a beach town unlike the others in San Diego and the goal of "The People's Tour" is to tell a different story about OB than what is portrayed in the media, tourist guides, and in the minds of other San Diegans. The tour's purpose it to also show the full history of the "hippie" movement associated with the community, to acknowledge that "hippiness" in OB is still very much a white space, and show how much of social activism done in neighborhood has been for benefit of majority historically white population. This tour of OB is rooted in the historical context of the neighborhood that may not be so obvious and aims to educate tourists on a different perspective of the community and its people than what is traditionally marketed in the tourism industry.

“The People’s Tour of Ocean Beach” is intended for tourists who wish to build a more meaningful engagement with the places that they visit, who value learning the full history of a region, and who are not afraid to delve into the maybe not so glamorous aspects history that have shaped the a community’s narrative and development. Theoretically, I would say anyone can and should participate in this tour but realistically the audience will likely be tourists who are already mindful about the impacts of their travel but my hope is to also connect the tour to residents who maybe don’t know the full history of their town or other San Diegans who have a warped view of OB as generally presented to them by popular media. Local partners will most definitely need to be involved and the main tour guide would be myself and a handful of others who serve as the go-between for tourists participating on the tour and experts sharing their knowledge on the tour. I would need to connect with the lifeguards from the City of San Diego, curators from the California Surf Museum, members of local Indigenous groups such as the the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay or the Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay, the Ocean Beach Historical Society, park rangers from the Cabrillo National Monument, local business and restaurant owners, the Ocean Beach Mainstreet Association, and the OB Planning Board. All of these groups would ideally participate in the tour by being present at the different locations as we move along to tell their story and contribute to the larger conservation and historical context of the tour. The Ocean Beach Mainstreet Association puts out a “OB Self-Guided Historic Walking Tour” guide which this tour is intended as an additional tack on to that one. This tour included sites along Newport Ave, the Ocean Beach Elementary School, the local fire station, Ocean Beach Library, Dog Beach, Robb Field Memorial Park, and the Ocean Beach State Park. The OB Rag is another organization that works to build positive tour operations by creating an easily accessible OB history in the form of an online newspaper.

For the tour logistics, I think it's important to take into consideration the time constraints that tourists may have when visiting an area; to do a tour like this in full may require a whole day. I would have to coordinate with the MTD bus system to get us around the OB area and walking will also be our main form of transportation; finding a place for tourists to park their cars will also be necessary as beach parking is not guaranteed. I will also want to make sure I am establishing partnerships with local organizations and business owners in order to get permission from local people to even do this tour in the first place and share OB history. For food, I would like to ask local restaurants, such as Hodad's and Mike's Taco Club, for sponsorships by having the tour participants get a meal voucher for one or two eateries so that they can get a taste of OB, and the restaurants get to have their business advertised. Whatever fee participants may pay to take the tour will cover a bus pass, meal vouchers, and donations to local organizations and businesses for the use of their spaces and knowledge.

And now...onto the tour! "The People's Tour of Ocean Beach" will, naturally, begin at the beach, where we will start with a discussion about oceanic and surfing history in OB. We will meet in the late morning at the beach parking lot at the end of W. Point Loma Boulevard and walk south down the beach. The introduction of surfing to OB is credited to Duke Kahanamoku, who loaned a board to a local lifeguard in 1916 (Duvall, 2022). Kahanamoku is considered to be the father of modern surfing and visited OB in 1924 to give another surfing demonstration while continuing to travel the world as an ambassador for surfing, swimming and Hawai'i. 1966 marked a half-a-century of OB's association with the sport of surfing and it was here that the third annual World Surfing Championship was held, the first in the United States. The contest helped to put OB on the map and brought international attention and recognition to San Diego as a surfing hub. The U.S. Surfing Association chairman at the time, Brennan McClelland, is

quoted in saying that “the championship site committee studied hundreds of miles of California coastline before deciding that San Diego city beaches offered the best surfing conditions” (Duvall, 2022). “The Duke” himself was a special guest as honorary chairman of the event, whose spirit was sorely needed in the 1960s San Diego surfing community.

At the time, “The San Diego Surf Wars” resulted in tensions between homeowners and surfers, who as a group were blamed for rowdiness, debauchery, indecency, and overall “beach bummyness”; Public coastal access to local beaches and surf breaks was becoming increasingly restricted by private property owners. Anti-surfing laws and ordinances were drawn up, where surfing would be regulated to just a few city beaches; surfing clubs, such as the Ocean beach Surfing Club and Sunset Cliffs Surf Club, were formed to promote responsible behavior and self-policing. Although Australian surfer Nat Young was the winner of the ‘66 World Surfing Championship, the OB contest was more of a “real” world contest than the previous two WSCs as surfers from 10 different countries participated. For OB residents, the contest served as a source of revenue, local participation, economic stimulation, and media coverage; for example the poster for the event was created by local artist and resident Mike Dormer. The World Surfing Championships also helped put San Diego on the map as a desirable tourist destination (Duvall, 2013).

Surfboard design history is also prevalent in OB as shaper Steve Lis is credited with creating The Fish surfboard, a shorter, wider board with iconic twin-fins, in 1967 at the age of 16 (San Diego Surf School). At the time, a group of surfers began to experiment with new board designs to navigate the powerful, fast waves of OB which were not as manageable with a traditional longboard shape. The fish design allows for more maneuverability and increased speed that became popular in mainstream surfing following its use by Jim Blears and David

Nuuhiwa at the 1972 WSC's also held in OB, and continues to remain one of the most versatile and enduring designs today (Feldmann). Much of San Diego's surfing history can be found in books, documentaries, museums, and in memories; local surfing history at OB is not preserved in any way, and where better to discuss it than at the place where it all started, Ocean Beach.

We will continue along the beach till we arrive at the intersection of Abbott St and Santa Monica Ave where the beach's main lifeguard station is located; here is a 6-foot bronze statue of a lifeguard peering out at the ocean. It's a pretty generic statue of a man, with a nondescript face, forward facing chest, and upward chin (Repard, 2013). Most people walk right past him as they stroll down the walkway to get to the beach or the Veteran's Plaza Park next to the station. The statue was created by artist Richard Arnold commemorating members of the San Diego Lifeguard Service who watched over him and passed along advice and wisdom while he was growing up in OB in the 1950s. The statue also honors an event on May 5, 1918 that gave rise to San Diego's modern lifeguard service where thirteen people drowned in strong rip currents off of Ocean Beach, while 60 other lives were saved in heroic rescue efforts by swimmers and police lifeguards, including George Freeth, a surfing pioneer who is credited along "the Duke" with bringing surfing to California. When the statue was unveiled in 2013, an unveiling ceremony took place with music, prayers, and speeches, and 13 lifeguards tossed leis into the ocean in memory of the 1918 victims. Robert Baxley, a former OB lifeguard, was credited with coming up with the idea of this statue, and Arnold stated that it was a deeply emotional and personal project for him. Today, there are almost 300 lifeguards stationed at OB who continue to serve the community and the city at large (Repard, 2013).

We will return to the beach later, but now we will pivot to discussing Indigenous history in OB and the greater San Diego area by going down Sunset Cliffs Boulevard. Sunset Cliffs are

an iconic part of OB and even San Diego; people gather here to take pictures, explore the tide pools, surf, and of course, watch the sunset. From Sunset Cliffs, you can look south down the coast and see the outline of Ballast Point which marks the arrival of Europeans to the West Coast and the beginning of colonization for Indigenous Californians; in 1542 Cabrillo stopped at this point before continuing on up the rest of the coast. Ballast Point is under the joint management of the U.S. navy and the National Park Service, which manages Cabrillo National Monument. I would like to remind you all as tourists that when we visit this monument we are viewing a statue that commemorates a man whose expedition represents the colonization of California and great loss of life to Indigenous people in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Carter). The Kumeyaay name for Sunset Cliffs is “Amat Kunyily” meaning “Black Earth” (Prodanovich, 2020).

Today, the Kumeyaay Nation is composed of twelve bands living in thirteen reservations north of the Mexican border, and five communities spread throughout northern Baja California. These communities are located far more inland than their ancestral homelands along the coast and many Indigenous people were forced to move away from the coast as more people came to San Diego. The Kumeyaay people are responsible for the protection of a little over three million acres in San Diego County (Gormlie, 2014). The modern Kumeyaay and their ancestors have been coming to *Mat Loan*, , the Point Loma Peninsula, for at least the last 12,000 years; here they gathered mussels, fished, and harvested abalone shells. Many of the place names in San Diego previously thought to be Spanish, are in fact Kumeyaay, who belong to the Yuman language family (Carter); for example *La Jolla* means “close to the ocean”, *Palomar* means “arrow”, and *Jamul* means “rainwater”. Kumeyaay itself means “those who face the water from a cliff” which many believe to be a reference to Sunset Cliffs (Gormlie, 2014).

Ocean Beach was called “Ha’apai” which means “People’s Water” by the Kumeyaay and was used as a launch point for boats and dugout canoes (Prodanovich, 2020). Kumeyaay cosmology contains a seamless blending of the land to the ocean to the sky. In stark contrast to the European tradition to separate geography from oceanography from astronomy, these “worlds” are seen as one connected universe in Kumeyaay teachings (Loughlin, 2015). The ocean is the origin of humanity in the Kumeyaay creation story and there is evidence that they used the ocean for recreation, such as swimming for fun and riding waves (Prodanovich, 2020). The coastal region of OB provided the Kumeyaay with resources such as shallow and deep water fish, shellfish, seasonal waterfowl, salt, kelp, salt marsh medicinal plants, abalone shell, and tar. They built boats from reeds that they used to navigate the ocean, lagoons, and coastal sloughs and acted as sophisticated stewards of natural resources, contrary to the hunter-gatherer lifestyle that Indigenous Californians were acquitted to for a long time. For centuries, the Kumeyaay persisted on the coast and even after being driven away, the few remaining Kumeyaay were listed as fishermen on an 1833 census, however by the 1870s, they were permanently displaced inland (Loughlin, 2015).

Even though we just talked about the importance of surfing in California, few families can claim more than three generations, and outside of Hawai’i, most surfers can't actually have that much history at a particular spot; none of this compares to the history of those who have the deepest roots along the San Diego coast, the original locals indigenous to the region, the Kumeyaay Nation. In more recent times, programs like San Diego-based Native Like Water have sought to reconnect Indigenous youth to their coastal roots by bringing them together to receive an “indigenized education” in science, conservation, culture and surfing. Since the program’s inception in 2000, many hundreds of Indigenous youth have participated and benefitted from

reconnecting with both the coast and an integral part of their cultural identity. One important question us non-Indigenous people living or visiting this region should ask ourselves is “whose coast are we surfing?” (Prodanovich, 2020).

After our discussion at Sunset Cliffs we will continue on again to Newport Ave; participants will go off to get something to eat and a meeting spot will be chosen for about an hour later. Newport Ave is a street that has served many purposes throughout OB history, including the center of tourism, concentration and protection of small businesses, community organizing, and sites of activism and protest. The OB Mainstreet Association is located at the corner of Newport Ave and Bacon St and was formed in 1978 by Denny Knox who used to own Cabrillo Art Center, now OB Surf n’ Skate (Black, 2022). The only Starbucks in town also was located on Newport Ave and Bacon St, opening in 2001 after fierce push-back and protests from residents and finally closing permanently in early 2022. Many OB residents wanted to and continue to want to keep OB non-corporate, to support local small businesses, and reject large chain stores moving into the community (Black, 2022). Resistance to the Target store on Newport Ave was also persistent before its opening in 2019 as many local businesses feared losing customers, particularly tourists, to the large chain store. This store location is unique however as it follows a smaller community-focused setup, does not sell alcohol, and aims to employ mostly OB residents (Black, 2022). Although OB can be considered a small business haven, many residents have been forced out from the place they grew up in due to rising cost of living and housing. Shops along Newport Ave include thrift and antique stores, souvenir shops, surf shops, clothing stores, small markets, and restaurants. Even though it may not be the same Newport Ave of decades past, it continues to act as the beating heart of OB community and serves as the main intersection of locals and visitors.

Environmental and social activism has worked to shape OB into what we know it as today. First at Voltaire St is the People's Food Store Co-op, which serves as an alternative to large institutional groceries stores and aims to connect people to where their food comes from by partnering with nearby farms. The co-op was formed in 1971 and originated out of a food buying club originally operated at the Ocean Beach Free School. Another example comes from Collier Park, located along Nimitz Boulevard. The park is named after D.C. Collier, known as the “father of OB” who had dedicated the land to the “children of San Diego”; the park’s size has been continually shrinking over the years as new developments have sprung up. Tensions between residents who wanted to preserve the natural space for public access and city officials who aimed to sell off tracts to developers culminated in the spring of 1971, when a riot broke out between protesters and law enforcement. The protest was a combination of supporters of the park and its environmental importance to the town and protesters of the Vietnam War. Today, the park is not as large as it was nearly 50 years ago but it continues to serve as an important community space for local families and also contains the Point Loma Native Plant Reserve. The OB Rec Center on Santa Monica Ave is the meeting place of the OB Planning Board the first democratically-elected neighborhood planning board in the county and state; the Planning Board’s mission is to preserve OB’s value on community and to ensure that local voices are consulted and heard when new developments are planned by the city (Gormile, 2012).

Now as we walk through the residential neighborhoods along the north-south oriented stress we will discuss how Ocean Beach has long been associated with hippies and counterculture that arose in the ‘60s. By 1967 it was already evident that Ocean Beach was morphing into the San Diego equivalent of that fabled and iconic San Francisco neighborhood of Haight-Ashbury synonymous with “hippie-ism”. Many of the factors that contributed to the

incubation of OB as a community supportive of emerging counterculture includes the presence of surf culture and its interconnectedness with counterculture, the young people who made up a large portion of the residents and helped make OB a classic beach-college town at the time, the also large number of young people who were sailors or working-class citizens, and the provision of cultural space for the development of subculture in music, art, styles, language, haircuts, and politics. Since the ‘60s, OB has continued to provide such cultural space for alternative lifestyles that went against the grain of the establishment of mainstream society, resisted overly-ambitious urban development, provided an incubator for ecological concern, and demonstrated to the rest of San Diego an awareness of the changes that society was experiencing at the time (Gormlie, 2017).

As we've been touring around OB, you've probably heard or seen the local feral parrots. These Mexican red headed Amazon parrots are native to central and South America and it is estimated that there are up to 350 birds in the OB/Point Loma flock alone. These birds nest at the top of date palms and live off of a diet of the fruit of carob trees, date palms, and eucalyptus berries. They make a distinctive squawk/screech sound and have a green body with a red head. These birds' ancestors originally came from the Gulf Coast of Mexico and were introduced by people to the OB area. One theory is that they were kept as pets before being released to the wild and there is a record of them going back to the 1930's in OB. The birds have established communal roosts, are mostly indifferent to people, and help make up the soundscape of the beach community (PBS, 2011).

We will end our tour back on the beach at the Ocean Beach Pier, which is currently closed to activity for the OB Pier Renovation Project being implemented by the City of San Diego. The pier opened in 1966, is an iconic landmark of the community, and has been a fixed

post in the tourism imagination of OB. The historic designation, demolition, and replacement of the pier was announced at the start of this year with the posting of a procedural notice to the pier's entrance gates. Several community workshops have been held in collaboration with the OB Planning Board to discuss the plans for the pier with residents but many have fond memories of the iconic wooden pier; a Junior Lifeguard tradition is to jump off the pier and swim back to the beach after completing the program. The impact from high surf and ocean storms have closed the pier many times in the past 20 years including the winter storms of 2023. The City has said the cycle of damage and repairs of the pier has been increasingly challenging and expensive in recent years and that it is time for a more long-lasting solution even if it means losing access to an iconic landmark for an indefinite period of time (KPBS, 2024).

My hope in participating on this tour is that you have moved through the flow of the story to take what we learned at each location and discussion to build a cohesive picture of OB history. To make the “invisible more visible” at tourist sites in OB, I would like to work with local organizations to create more signage commemorating the individuals and groups that have modeled OB into its community structure today, change the language for how we talk about tourism in OB so as not to advertise it as only a place of partying and debauchery but of containing a rich and diverse history, and finally to make all of the information in this tour more accessible to the public by creating an online and printed guide. Such a tour is meant to showcase a different perspective of OB and to encourage you to go back to your own communities with the mindset of a visitor to see what is familiar to you with a new lens (Pezzulo, 2007). It is also meant to serve as a way to demonstrate how tourism doesn't have to be this grand, complicated thing and that there is a growing need for sustainable cultural tourism everywhere we visit (Guyette, 2013). “The People’s Tour” showcases a meaningful connection between cultures

because it embraces the tourist as a visitor eager to learn and positions outsiders to a place to dive into a local region and its people. It can effect change and enhance social and environmental justice by highlighting all of the past actions in a place and show the ways in which justice can continue to be sought for all members of the community. I hope you have enjoyed connecting with the magnetic place that is Ocean Beach and that you take what you are motivated to delve into the history of your community beyond what its general reputation or stereotype.

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